

PRESIDENT OF INDIA GRACES THE NATIONAL SARAS MELA IN VIJAYAWADA

SHGs AND SARAS MELAS CAN PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN EXTENDING THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT TO EVERY VILLAGE AND EVERY HOUSEHOLD: PRESIDENT DROUPADI MURMU

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The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu graced the National SARAS Mela, organised by the Union Ministry of Rural Development and the Government of Andhra Pradesh, in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh today (October 15, 2026). The President also visited the SARAS stalls and interacted with Lakhpati Didis on the occasion.



Addressing the gathering, the President said that rural women play a vital role in agriculture. Through Self-Help Groups, they have found a new path to financial, technical, and social empowerment. She was happy to note that along with an encouraging rise in women's entrepreneurship, rural women's participation in economic decision-making has also increased. She said that it is essential for equitable and inclusive development of our country.



The President noted that Women's Self-Help Groups have contributed effectively to the rural economy. Over the last 12 years, the number of women associated with these groups has risen to more than 10 crores. These women are connected to over 90 lakh Self-Help Groups. She highlighted that they are making a meaningful contribution to the economic well-being of their families. She said that this process of participation is contributing to women-centric, inclusive rural development. It has also led to a vast expansion of opportunities for collective enterprise.



The President was happy to note that Women's Self-Help Groups are playing an important role in community activities and SHGs are making significant contributions to the holistic transformation of rural life and inclusive development of our country.



The President said that the Government of India has imparted a distinct momentum and direction to rural women's empowerment through the 'Lakhpati Didi' initiative. Increasing participation in various modern sectors such as digital services and renewable energy has opened up new avenues for skill development for rural women.



The President said that today, rural women are not merely beneficiaries of schemes. They have become wealth creators and are emerging as drivers of development. Yet, we still have a long way to go on this journey of empowerment. A key yardstick for empowerment should be the extent to which rural women have gained control over their own income and assets. At the same time, there is a need to promote community-based support systems for domestic care responsibilities. Rural women's participation in climate-resilient enterprises must also be increased.

The President said that SARAS Melas are evolving into platforms for strengthening the rural economy. These fairs have been established as thriving rural markets. Through them, the direct connection between rural women entrepreneurs and consumers across the country has been strengthened. She said that to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, it is essential to extend the benefits of development to every village and every household. SHGs and SARAS Melas can play a leading role in this endeavour.



Around 1500 women SHG entrepreneurs and Lakshpati Didis from 34 States and Union Territories are showcasing their products through more than 650 stalls in this edition of the National SARAS Mela, which is open till October 31, 2026.

Please click [here](#) to see the President's Speech-

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